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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- 11. Mideast
- 12. U.S.-Israel Relations
- 13. Muslim-Americans

Key stories in the media:

HaQaretz published the results of a survey conducted over the past

days among Israelis by Dialog:

- The majority of the public -- 57% -- supports the view of MK Shaul Mofaz of Kadima, who published a plan earlier this week, in which he called for dialogue with Hamas under certain conditions. Inside Kadima the idea has tremendous support by some 72 percent of the party's voters. But even 53 percent of Likud supporters back the idea. The poll shows that the left is breaking apart and that Likud is moving to the center. HaQaretz comments that it seems that Mofaz knew that he was marching on solid political ground when he included this radical article in his plan.

- The survey was carried out toward the end of Netanyahu's visit to Washington this week. HaQaretz says that the lessons the PM experienced at the hands of the White House left no scars in the hearts of the average Israeli. The vast majority of those asked said that the White House's attitude toward Netanyahu was "reasonable." Just a quarter of those asked claimed that the attitude of the White House toward Netanyahu was humiliating.

According to HaQaretz, there are two possible ways of interpreting this: either that the emotional way with which the politicians and the media received the fact that Netanyahu went to the White House late in the evening in a van does not affect the general public or that the public believes that Netanyahu deserves what he got. HaQaretz remarks that the former is probably correct: The emotional discussion over the circumstances of the meeting between Netanyahu and U.S. President Barack Obama stayed in the political-media world's court and the street did not form its opinions apart from that.

- In general, the results of the survey are favorable to Netanyahu. A great majority blames Mahmoud Abbas for the impasse in the peace process with the Palestinians. The overall level of satisfaction from Netanyahu continues to be positive, as it was five months ago, after 100 days in government. Also with regards to his suitability to the post of prime minister, he leads Tzipi Livni, who is second, by a significant margin: 43 percent for Netanyahu and 27 percent for Livni.

- FM Avigdor Lieberman continues to be seen negatively; also unpopular is Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz. The average Israeli is angry and dissatisfied with Labor and its leader, DM Ehud Barak. Not long ago, Barak was the most popular minister in the government by a substantial margin. Netanyahu has now surpassed him. Since the last survey, held in mid-June, Barak lost 20 points in popular support. In June, 29 percent were dissatisfied with Barak's conduct and now that number has increased to 44 percent.

HaQaretz reported that Israel has suspended its efforts to have Gilad Shalit released until close to the PA elections in January 2010.

HaQaretz reported that the Foreign Ministry's written goals do not even mention the word Palestinians.

Yediot cited Kadima chair Tzipi Livni's objection to Shaul Mofaz's peace plan. She reportedly disputes Mofaz's willingness to speak to Hamas, against which Israel enlisted the entire world.

The Jerusalem Post and other leading media reported that French President Nicolas Sarkozy is expected to urge Syrian President Bashar Assad to open direct talks with Israel when the two men meet in Paris today. Israel Radio reported that in an interview with the French daily Le Figaro, Assad called President Obama the weakest among the Mideast mediators. Major media reported that yesterday the Prime Minister's Office denied reports that Netanyahu had relayed a message to Assad that Israel is willing to cede the Golan.

However, HaQaretz quoted diplomatic sources in Jerusalem saying yesterday that Netanyahu is also examining the possibility that France will replace Turkey as a mediator between Israel and Syria. HaQaretz also reported that over recent weeks IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi has privately expressed his support for the resumption of diplomatic talks with Syria.

Makor Rishon-Hatzofe reported that settler leaders are conducting a PR campaign in the U.S.

The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday Israel and the international community signaled new optimism after PA officials indicated that elections scheduled for January would not go ahead.

Leading media reported on a clash that took place this morning in

the northern Gaza Strip between IDF troops and suspected terrorists.

Israel Radio quoted Palestinian sources as saying that a Palestinian man was killed and several others were arrested.

Israel Radio reported on a small protest against President Peres and Israel in Sao Paulo, where posters portrayed him as Hitler. On the other hand the radio reported that Brazilian legislators, including those of Arab origin, warmly welcomed Peres; Israel Radio reported that Peres' entourage expects larger demonstrations in Argentina.

HaQaretz reported that Judge Richard Goldstone told the daily yesterday that President Shimon Peres' remarks criticizing him were "specious and ill-befitting the head of the State of Israel." Goldstone was responding to Peres' characterization of him as a Qsmall manQ out to hurt Israel. He was also quoted as saying, "I do not believe that any nation should protect another nation blindly. I would prefer to see the United States furnish reasons for criticizing the report. The U.S. has supported our call for credible investigations by Israel and by the Gaza authorities, whether the PA or Hamas.Q Goldstone was quoted as saying that criticism of his report was a classic case of Qattacking the messenger.Q Leading media reported that former PM Ehud Olmert spoke out against the Goldstone Commission during a ceremony unveiling a 9/11 memorial in Jerusalem.

The media reported that yesterday the Jerusalem District Court indicted QJewish terroristQ Yaakov Teitel. The indictment included 14 charges. Teitel said upon arriving at the court: "It was a pleasure and honor to serve my God. God is proud of what I have done. I have no regrets." According to the indictment, Teitel decided while still a resident of the U.S. to target Palestinians to avenge terrorist attacks against Israel.

Asked about the alleged e-mail exchange surrounding a possible commemoration of Meir Kahane at the Knesset, the spokesman of the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv was quoted as saying in comments to Makor Rishon-Hatzofe that it is not unusual for American officials to ask questions relating to their counterpartsQ plans. The daily conjectured that this is not the first case of the U.S. intervening in IsraelQs affairs, as in the case of the Golan referendum. Israel Radio quoted the London-based Al-Hayat as saying that during his talks with PM Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday, Sarkozy advocated diplomatic talks with Tehran, while Netanyahu did not rule out military action against Iran.

HaQaretz reported that during a three-week coast-to-coast lecture tour in the U.S. last month -- following the accepted practice of former prime ministers -- Ehud Olmert was stunned to find an America where the dominant discourse was Palestinian, with unprecedented hostility to Israel and growing indifference to its continued existence as a homeland for the Jewish people. Olmert has spoken at hundreds of universities over the past 20 years. HaQaretz ran a feature about Col. (res.) Ben Tzion Gruber from the settlement of Efrat in Gush Etzion, a Qone-man self appointed PR command unitQ who has crisscrossed the U.S. Q even before Operation Cast Lead Q explaining the unique way the IDF conducts itself in its war against Hamas terror.

The Jerusalem Post quoted senior Israeli defense officials as saying that Israel is likely to demand that it be allowed to participate in the production of the F-35 aircraftQs ordering.

Yediot reported that former U.S. President Bill Clinton and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, as well as five Congressmen, three U.S. Senators, three senior advisers in the Obama administration, and the Deputy Secretary of State, will be among the guests of the Sixth Saban Forum that opens tomorrow in Jerusalem.

Former U.S. security official, Hillary Mann Leverett, who is Jewish and once served in the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, was quoted as saying in an interview with HaQaretz that Washington must build relations with Tehran if it wants to succeed in the region.

HaQaretz reported that Oranim, an organization that publicly split from Birthright Israel-Taglit a few months ago, plans to bring its first 120 participants from abroad next month. Prior to the split, Oranim was Birthright's largest subcontractor, having brought some

50,000 young Diaspora Jews to Israel for visits. Birthright, which has brought approximately 220,000 Jews to Israel for 10-day visits since its inception in 2000, is a joint venture between the Israeli Government, major American Jewish donors, and the Jewish Agency for Israel. It mainly sets policy and raises funds, which it then funnels to various smaller groups that recruit the students and organize the trips. HaQaretz quoted Oranim's director, Shlomo (Momo) Lifshitz, as saying he split from Birthright over its demand that he stop urging trip participants to immigrate to Israel and marry other Jews. He said that both these suggestions irritated the American donors, including major Jewish federations.

Yediot correspondent Eldad Beck reported from northern Iraq.

The USSTRATCOM Command Chaplain, Rabbi (Col., USAF) Brett Oxman, was quoted as saying in an interview with HaQaretz that one must learn to work in a multi-faith, pluralist environment.

Yediot reported that there has been a sharp increase in enlistment in combat units by young Israeli men. Conversely, 27% of youth are not drafted at all.

Maariv and other media reported that the Government dropped the planned drought tax but that the price of water is soaring.

II. Mideast:

Block Quotes:

II. QA Glass of Wine Will Do

Senior columnist Nahum Barnea wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (11/13): QIt is not peace plans that are lacking in the Middle East, it is the courage to sign them, the political power to pass them and the ability to meet their terms on the day after. Mofaz offers the Palestinians a state within provisional borders that will include 60 percent of the West Bank's area. An identical proposal, or more generous, was made by Ehud Barak to the Palestinians and the Americans. The Palestinians rejected the proposal out of hand: they said that with Israel, temporary is permanent. After them, the proposal was rejected by the Americans. Mofaz is optimistic: he will persuade the Americans and they will persuade the Palestinians. If Fatah is not convinced, we will go to Hamas. Meanwhile, in the general diplomatic tedium, he manages to make headlines. The only plan that should worry Netanyahu's government at present is the plan of Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. Fayyad proposes a process: the Palestinian state will be established without permanent borders. It will deal in building institutions for two years. In conjunction with this, it will negotiate with Israel. If the negotiations do not give rise to an agreement, the issue will be turned over to the U.N. institutions. The Security Council will reach a resolution on the content of the arrangement, including borders. The U.S. will not impose a veto. The outcome will be a unilateral solution under the auspices of the U.N. The Security Council will not send U.N. troops to impose the terms of the agreement upon Israel. It is enough for it to decide. If Israel does not cooperate, the ostracism process will begin. Within a short period, Israel will be a pariah state. It will surrender: it will have no choice. Fayyad has no real influence on the Palestinian street. Abu Mazen is moving away from him.... The Obama administration preferred to adopt the positive part of Fayyad's plan. Building national institutions is good. This is something that Israel and the European Union also agree to.

Fayyad is credible, serious and professional. He must be helped. Only by negotiations, Netanyahu said to Obama this week. The Israeli attempt for an unilateral move, in the disengagement from Gaza, ended in failure, and this is how the Palestinian attempt will end too. Israel will respond to every unilateral move with a unilateral move of its own. The ones to gain will be Hamas, and indirectly, Iran. We mustn't give up.

II. QPalestine Now

Columnist and former Meretz Party Chairman Yossi Sarid wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (11/13): QBoth sides have a right to act unilaterally. Abbas owes it to his people, to himself, and to us. This week, there were reports that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu finds this possibility very scary, and he expects the Americans to nip it in the bud. But his nightmare is our only chance for an end to the occupation in our time. When he declares independence, Abbas should call upon the Jews living in the state of Palestine to preserve the peace and to do their part in building up the new country as full and equal citizens, enjoying fair representation in all of its institutions. David Ben-Gurion would not have been upset by such a pretty act of plagiarism from his Declaration of Independence. And thus, Abbas will become the Palestinian Ben-Gurion.... This week, I phoned Abbas, after not having spoken to him for at least four years. I told him everything that I am writing now. I also told him something else: What happened to the wall in Berlin 20 years ago, and to apartheid a few months later, would also happen to the occupation: it will collapse, even if attempts are made to reinforce it with nails.

III. QAn Israeli Ambassador in Riyadh

Yehezkel Dror, Professor of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who served on the Winograd Commission of Inquiry into the Second Lebanon War, wrote in Ha'aretz (11/13): QIsrael is in need of a new diplomatic paradigm. Time is not on our side. QManagingQ the conflict based on the concept of Qmore of the sameQ will not do. No interim arrangement featuring Qa kind of Palestinian state on a portion of the territory of Judea and Samaria [i.e. the West Bank]Q will prevent the constant erosion of Israel's situation. That is also the verdict with respect to the QMofaz Plan,Q which continues to focus on the Palestinian issue, with the added element of Qopening the road to diplomatic arrangements and regional peace,Q instead of thinking first about a regional framework.... The Israeli peace plan must be shaped to meet the interests of the rulers of the moderate Arab states, as well as Asian Islamic states and the superpowers, led by the United States. It should be based on the Arab peace initiative but with changes.... Israel will be ready to express sorrow over Palestinian suffering, without taking responsibility for it, and will contribute proportionally and symbolically to a comprehensive regional resolution in the Middle East and a comprehensive global solution to the refugee problem. All of this would only come about in return for peace agreements with most of the Arab states, agreement which would be clearly reflected in reality through the presence, for example, of an Israeli embassy in Riyadh, a city which is an Islamic religious center, and where the puritanical Wahhabi sect of Islam developed. This would constitute a major ideological-psychological and cultural-religious turning point in the conflict. Such a shift is worth far-reaching concessions on Israel's part.

12. U.S.-Israel Relations:

Block Quotes:

II. QAre We with Obama, or What?

Senior columnist and longtime dove Yoel Marcus wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (11/13): QPresident Truman recognized Israel two hours after the state was declared, over the objections of his secretary of state, Gen. George Marshall. President Kennedy approved supplying Israel with Hawk anti-aircraft missiles. President Johnson approved the supply of jet fighters, and opened the White House to our leaders. It is doubtful that without America's support Israel would have attained its current status. It is not only because of the presidents, but also because

of the political influence of America's Jews, their high voting rates and their generous financial aid to candidates. A year after the electrifying election of President Obama, his goals have not been achieved: not the reduction of unemployment, nor the end of military involvement in Afghanistan, nor the neutralization of the Iranian threat. People are still wondering if his deeds are as good as his words. They used to say about Ariel Sharon that he was fun to be around, but as far as Obama is concerned, all we know is what we can see, and there's no certainty he will show the same intimacy some of his predecessors had with Israel's leaders. A great deal depends on whether we help him achieve his goals.

II. QWhat If Obama Betrays Israel?

Editor-in-Chief Amnon Lord wrote in the nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe (11/13): QThe relevant image in the relations between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. President Barack Obama is that of a date with a hologram. Every meeting between the two, like this week, looks like a crisis. Has Israeli done anything that made the man in the White House believe that there is a cause for a crisis? Or is it because the darling from the Muqata [Mahmoud Abbas], who spends his weekends in Amman, has decided ... to resign.... The problem is that Israel has no one it can trust in the White House -- with the possible exception of Dennis Ross.

III. QTime to Learn Spanish

Dr. Yoav J. Tenenbaum, a lecturer in the diplomacy program at Tel Aviv University, wrote in Ha'aretz (11/13): QThe United States is a strategic asset to Israel. And America's Hispanic population is a strategic asset within a strategic asset. It's like a Russian nesting doll: inside the largest doll are successively smaller ones, similar in appearance and form, which must be accorded special attention.... Although it is appropriate for Israel to cooperate with Jewish and pro-Israel organizations in the U.S. in devising a strategy aimed at the Hispanic population, it must also shape such a strategy as part of its own foreign policy. Israel should lead and not be led. To begin with, Israeli diplomats should initiate a serious dialogue with Hispanic opinion shapers including politicians, communal and religious leaders, journalists, artists, writers and businesspeople. This dialogue must not just have a concrete short-term objective: The diplomatic horizon should extend well beyond the day-to-day affairs of state. This dialogue -- conceived and conducted in Spanish, by fluent Spanish-speaking Israeli diplomats, preferably of Hispanic origin themselves could have a different outcome than one conducted in English or broken Spanish by diplomats with whom the Hispanic interlocutor has no common heritage, no matter how capable and intelligent they might be. American Hispanics have not been known for hostility toward Israel; they lack the same critical aloofness that exists among parts of the African-American population. The basis for a constructive, indeed friendly, dialogue exists.... The influence of Hispanic communities can also transcend the borders of the United States. Devising a separate, coherent, diplomatic strategy vis-a-vis a minority population per se may not be a common feature of foreign policy. However, considering the strategic importance of the Hispanic minority in the United States, and its ever-increasing presence and influence in the socio-political life of the country, it is not too soon for Israel to take such a step.

13. Muslim-Americans:

Block Quotes:

Q9/11, Remember?

Columnist Shmuel Rosner, who was HaQaretzOs correspondent in Washington, wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (11/13): QAround two years ago the Pew Research Center reported that Muslim-Americans are Qlargely assimilated, happy with their lives, and moderate with respect to many of the issues that have divided Muslims and Westerners around the world.Q But they sometimes create great embarrassment, such as the one caused this week when it turned out that the Fort Hood murderer was in contact with radical elements,

advocated the discharge of Muslims from military tasks, made shrill statements, and was neither arrested nor discharged. U.S. intelligence failed again.

CUNNINGHAM